



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Don Young
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2003

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

David Heymsfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

Mr. Sam G. Bonasso
Acting Administrator
Research and Special Programs Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Bonasso:

I write to ensure that all hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipeline operators have complied with the statutory requirement to provide pipeline mapping data to the Department of Transportation (DOT) no later than June 17, 2003, for use in its National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS).

The NPMS is a geographic information system database that contains the locations and selected attributes of hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines. The ability to locate our pipeline systems through a linked map system is a crucial tool for enhancing safety and security. For example, a comprehensive mapping system would allow emergency personnel to respond quickly and efficiently after an explosion or terrorist attack. Prompt action can minimize fatalities, serious injuries, and property damage. For these reasons, I believe that the National Pipeline Mapping System is a critical safety, security, and oversight tool and the NPMS must include maps for all pipeline operators if it is to serve this vital role.

Section 15 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-355) required hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipeline operators to provide appropriate pipeline mapping data to DOT by June 17, 2003. Section 15 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 is the culmination of years of effort by Congress and the Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) to establish the National Pipeline Mapping System. Fifteen years ago, Congress directed DOT to establish a pipeline inventory. After years of inaction, OPS started working with Federal and state agencies and the pipeline industry to develop the National Pipeline Mapping System in 1997. As a result of those efforts, in 1999, OPS issued standards for map submissions that were prepared by a joint government-industry team. OPS requested that hazardous liquid and natural gas operators voluntarily submit the information. Regrettably, many pipeline operators, particularly natural gas transmission operators, did not submit this critical safety

Mr. Sam G. Bonasso

June 30, 2003

Page 2

and security information. As a result, in 2002, Congress required pipeline operators to submit the information by June 17, 2003.

Although I understand that the overwhelming majority of pipeline operators have complied with the statutory requirement, I write to ensure that the National Pipeline Mapping System includes data on all pipeline operators and that it represents a complete map of the hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines of the United States. Accordingly, if any hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipeline operators have failed to comply with this provision, I request a list of the names and addresses of pipeline operators who have not complied with the statutory mandate and what enforcement actions OPS has taken to ensure compliance with the law. I request this information by July 10, 2003.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that our Nation's pipelines are safe and secure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Oberstar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Oberstar" clearly legible.

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member